

Solutions to Peoria's Hazardous Waste Landfill

(Copyright, T.E. 3/11/07)

RECEIVED
CLERK'S OFFICE
APR 06 2007

(Preface: In previous papers we mainly outlined the extensive dangers of Peoria Disposal Co.'s "hazardous (i.e. toxic) waste landfill." This paper focuses on solutions.)

PROBLEM #1: PDC's toxic waste landfill adjoining the west edge of the City of Peoria is in an extremely hazardous location for the health and welfare of the area's citizenry because: a) it sits right atop the porous sand-gravel aquifer from which most of the Greater Peoria area's water supply is drawn; b) it is immediately upwind of the city, and research elsewhere is showing morbid health effects due to fumes from such landfills.

The EPA permit allows 843 of the nation's most toxic chemicals to be put in the landfill, and PDC is seeking to add one more (PCBs) to the list. Most of these chemicals are volatile, i.e., will dissipate into the air. Past dumping has already created a toxic hill 5 stories (45 feet) high, and PDC wants to add another 5 stories of toxic waste. It will be by far the highest hill in the region. With the Chicago toxic waste landfill closed, hugely more such waste may be coming here. A synonym for toxic is poisonous!

For only 15 of the 79 years PDC's landfill has been operating has plastic membrane been used to line its earthen cells. But half of that, the first attempts at lining, are now deemed inadequate by federal-state EPA standards. However, with bulldozers daily packing down the newly dumped material, how intact any lining remains is doubtful.

There was a break in PDC's landfill about 1980. A witness said contents poured down the hill like lava, across Rt. 8 and on, closing the road. Professionals (HazMat) dressed in space age protective gear were called in to remove and dispose of it.

PROBLEM #2: The Illinois EPA staff said, "We are not allowed" to suggest new sites for landfills, unless authorized by our legislators. (Generally this is left to private investors.) EPA's role is basically enforcing standards for landfill operation and construction.

SITUATION: PDC's present EPA permit expires next year. **HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO DISCUSSION OR EFFORT TO FIND AN ALTERNATE AND SAFER SITE FOR SUCH A HAZARDOUS FACILITY.** There are 12 other such commercial landfills still operating in the nation. The closest is just over the Indiana-Illinois state line.

SOLUTION: If the state wants such a landfill, the safest site needs to be found. There are far superior locations in Central Illinois itself, and many possibilities elsewhere.

Some sites in this area already state approved for landfilling waste, each also with room for an addition of a hazardous waste component, are:

- 1 -- The Peoria City-County landfill 11 miles west of Peoria off Rt. 8 on Cottonwood Road. It is an extensive former stripmine that is partially used for area trash disposal.
- 2 -- The massive former mine area at Fairview just off I-74 about 35 miles west of Peoria in Fulton County. Little used to date. Has unmined areas. Sparsely populated area.
- 3 -- The Cook County (Chicago) Sanitary District property southwest of Canton in Fulton County. 15,000 acres of stripmined land. Approved for sewage sludge application.
- 4 -- Ameren Cilco: 5,000 acres of stripmined land off Rts. 24 & 9 south of Banner in Fulton Co. Site of its Duck Creek Power Plant. But the site is mostly pasture and woods.

There are 50,000 acres of stripmined land in Fulton County alone, and *much* more in other counties. Also, currently operating stripmines elsewhere (or other lands) can be molded to be future toxic waste disposal sites with means to retain, on site, any seepage.

5 -- Moreover, there is an operating hazardous waste landfill off I-74 just 35 miles on the other side of the Illinois-Indiana stateline. Relatively close for most shippers.

Consider that about 90% of the waste coming to PDC's landfill reportedly comes from outside the Peoria region of Illinois, *and* from 14 other states so far.

These are just a few of the numerous possible sites for a hazardous waste landfill in the Midwest region. We certainly can think outside the Peoria area.

BUT FOR THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF BOTH PEOPLE AND THIS AREA'S ECONOMY, IT IS TIME TO 1) PERMANENTLY CLOSE AND SEAL IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY PDC'S PEORIA TOXIC WASTE LANDFILL, AND 2) SET UP A 'FOREVER' MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM!

* Remember: State law *only* allows local governments the right to say yes or no to just expansion or location of a landfill. All other regulation authority is the EPA's.

(309) 637-1979 Tom Edwards/River Rescue

Tom Edwards
902 W. Moss Ave
Peoria, IL